

NC DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, INDEPENDENT LIVING REHABILITATION, INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES, MEDICAL EYE CARE

Section:	V in VR Manual V in ILR Manual 300 Item c. in ILS Manual and refer to Appendix L 200 VI in MEC Manual and refer to Appendix F
Title:	Voter Registration
Current Effective Date:	07/10
Revision History:	Revised 09/03; 02/08; 06/09

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993 as amended was enacted to enhance voting opportunities for every American citizen and especially to individuals with disabilities who have historically had lower voter registration rates.

Effective January 1, 2010, the North Carolina General Assembly made changes to the State Board of Elections Voter Registration law GS 163, and enacted:

“state law 2009-541 which allows for the preregistration of citizens between the ages of 16 and 17 years of age. Effective January 1, 2010, ‘a person who is at least 16 years of age but will not be 18 years of age by the date of the next election and who is otherwise qualified to register may preregister to vote and shall be automatically registered upon reaching the age of eligibility.’ Pursuant to the new legislation, GS 163-82.20 will now require designated voter registration agencies within this state to now offer individuals the opportunity to register or preregister to vote.”

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselor (ILRC), and Social Worker for the Blind (SWB) have the responsibility to (1) complete a Voter Registration Preference form and (2) offer the North Carolina Agency Voter Registration Application/Update form at application for service, recertification, at each renewal of service, change of address or name. The VRC, ILRC, and SWB are required to provide the same level of assistance in completing all voter registration forms as would be offered in the completion of agency forms. Agency staff should refrain from displaying campaign bumper stickers, wearing campaign or party buttons or pins, etc. while conducting voter registration business.

If the individual is already registered/preregistered or as voter registration forms are completed, note the information on the following applications for the appropriate program:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Application (On-Line DSB-4004-VR Rehabilitation Application with instructions),
- Independent Living Rehabilitation Application (On-Line DSB-4004-ILR Independent Living Rehabilitation Application with instructions),
- Independent Living Services Assessment and Plan (On-Line DSB-7103 Independent Living Services Program Assessment and Plan with instructions),
- Medical Eye Care Application (On-Line DSB-2001 Application for Eye Care Certification with instructions)

and in the case record indicate what the individual decided, what forms were completed, and where the forms were forwarded.

The agency uses a district office site coordinator in lieu of a statewide site coordinator for this program. The district office site coordinator has the following responsibilities: monitor the day to day administration of the program; to maintain adequate supplies of properly coded agency Voter Registration Application/Update forms (02 version), agency Voter Registration Preference forms, and Voter Registration Materials Transmittal forms. Also, the district office site coordinator should communicate with local and state election officials to ensure materials are current; train new or reassigned employees; resolve questions or problems; and ensure the timely and accurate transmittal of all completed voter registration forms. All voter registration forms should be submitted to the district office site coordinator for weekly submission to the local board of elections office in the county in which the individual lives as **the form must be submitted within five business days of completion by the individual.**

Special Note for ILS/MEC applications: Social Workers for the Blind while in their home counties can obtain forms from their local board of elections and can submit the agency Voter Preference forms, Voter Registration Application form and Voter Registration Materials Transmittal forms to the local board of elections. If the Social Worker for the Blind is located in the District Office, then the forms can be submitted to the site coordinator in their office.

VRC, ILRC and SWB must utilize the following updated forms to meet the requirements of this law.

Voter Registration Preference form
Voter Registration Preference form (Spanish)
Agency Voter Registration Transmittal form
Voter Registration Supplies Request form

VRC, ILRC and SWB may order the Voter Registration Application/Update form by utilizing the above Voter Registration Supplies Request form. Regardless of whether or not an individual wishes to register/preregister, each individual must complete a “Voter Registration Preference form.” This form is used only for voter registration/preregister purposes, and serves to protect the individual from any coercion. Agency staff should reassure individuals of this fact in order to obtain a signature on the Voter Registration Preference form. Please note that the current form used to be called “declination” forms.

- a. The individual should complete the form by checking the box next to the appropriate answer as to whether s/he wish to register/preregister to vote, print his/her full name, enter the date of birth, and sign and date the form that day.
- b. If the individual refuses to complete the preference form, the VRC, ILRC, and SWB should print the individual's name and date of birth, initial the form, print the transaction date and transmit the completed Voter Registration Preference form to the district office site coordinator to be submitted in the same timely manner as Voter Registration Application/Update forms. The VRC, ILRC, and SWB must note the transaction in the case file and offer the Voter Registration Preference and Voter Registration Application/Update form the next time the VRC, ILRC, and SWB does the annual review, renewal of service, or makes a change of address or name.

The online preference form may be used in lieu of the paper preference form.

Section: V
Title: Voter Registration
Current Effective Date: 07/10

- c. If the individual contacts the VRC, ILRC, and SWB by phone or e-mail for changes of address or name an agency Voter Registration Application/Update form and Voter Registration Preference form should be mailed to the individual. The VRC, ILRC, and SWB should sign a preference form and indicate that a voter registration form was mailed to the applicant.
- d. It is not necessary to offer Voter Registration to: non-US citizens, non-North Carolina residents, current prisoners, felony parolees unless the Governor has restored voting rights, anyone with a court order of mental incompetence still in effect, or anyone accompanying the applicant.

1. Agency Voter Registration Application/Update form (can be ordered from NCSBOE utilizing the North Carolina Voter Registration Supplies Order form)

- a. **Desires to register to vote at agency:** If an individual is not registered/preregistered and wishes to complete an application, the VRC, ILRC, and SWB should provide the individual with the Voter Registration Preference form which indicates a desire to complete a Voter Registration Application/Update form and provide the individual with the Voter Registration Application/Update form. The VRC, ILRC, and SWB are required to provide the same degree of assistance as would be given for the completion of standard agency forms.
- b. **Desires to register to vote, but does not want to complete at agency:** If an individual is not registered/preregistered and wishes to become registered/preregistered but does not wish to complete the Voter Registration Application/Update form at the agency office, the VRC, ILRC, and SWB should offer the individual the opportunity to take the application home to complete at a later time. The individual should be told that the Voter Registration Application/Update form can be returned in **any of three ways:**
 - (1.) MAIL the completed application to the board of elections office in the county where the individual lives,
 - (2.) HAND DELIVER the application to the county board of elections office, or have a third party return it to the county board of elections, or
 - (3.) RETURN the application to the agency district office for transmittal to the county board of elections office.

Note: There is a place on the Voter Registration Preference form for an individual to mark showing a choice not to register/preregister at the agency at that time but wishes to take a Voter Registration Application/Update form to complete at a later date.

- c. **Desires to change or update name/address:** If the individual is registered/preregistered but needs to update a name, address and/or party affiliation, the VRC, ILRC, and SWB should provide the Voter Registration Preference form and the applicant should complete the agency Voter Registration Application/Update form to change any or all of the following: name, physical address, mailing address (if different), and party affiliation. If the individual is updating an address or a name, the previous name or address section of the application should be completed with the old information.

Each time an individual moves and notifies the agency of a change of address, the VRC,

ILRC, and SWB are required to offer the opportunity to complete a change of address for voter registration.

- d. **Declines voter registration because already registered:** If the individual is already registered/preregistered, the VRC, ILRC, and SWB should provide a Voter Registration Preference form so the individual can indicate s/he is already registered/preregistered to vote at his/her current address. The VRC, ILRC, and SWB needs to inform the individual that the response on the Voter Registration Preference form will not prohibit voter registration at a later date or changes to existing registration. In completing the Voter Registration Preference form, make sure that the individual checks the box that indicates s/he is already registered/preregistered to vote.
- e. **Declines voter registration, no reason given:** If the individual is not registered/preregistered and does not wish to register/preregister at this time, the VRC, ILRC, and SWB must ask the individual to fill out a Voter Registration Preference form indicating s/he is registered/preregistered to vote, and declined when offered the opportunity to complete the application to register/preregister, reassure the individual that applying to register/preregister to vote or declining to register to vote will have no effect on the services or benefits provided by the agency.
- f. **Unsure of registration status:** If the individual is not sure of his registration, the VRC, ILRC, and SWB should direct the individual to the appropriate county board of elections office or provide the telephone number. If the individual chooses to complete the Voter Registration Preference form and the Voter Registration Application/Update form, the individual may do so and the county board of elections will determine the individual's eligibility.
- g. **Preregistration:** North Carolina allows a 16 year old to pre-register to vote if they understand that they must be 18 years of age to vote on Election Day of the general election. Also, North Carolina allows a 17 year old to register and vote in primaries if the person will be 18 years old by the general election. If you have a 17-year-old individual who meets this qualification and wishes to complete a Voter Registration Preference form and Voter Registration Application/Update form, s/he may do so. These forms should be sent to the county board of elections for processing.

2. Agency Voter Registration Materials Transmittal form

The district office site coordinator should complete the agency Voter Registration Material Transmittal form by noting the total number of Voter Registration Application/Update forms, and the total number of Voter Registration Preference forms and **mail in a sealed envelope within five (5) business days to the respective county boards of election offices.**